



M E D E A.

A

T R A G E D Y.



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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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M E D E A.

A

T R A G E D Y.

By Richard Glover. R

——— *Æstuat ingens*
Imo in corde pudor, mixtoque insania luctu,
Et furiis agitatus amor, et conscia virtus.

ÆNEID.

The FOURTH EDITION.



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M.DCC.LXII.

TO THE
K I N G

THIS TRAGEDY

O F

M E D E A

I S

MOST HUMBLY INSCRIB'D

B Y

H I S M A J E S T Y's

MOST DUTIFUL,
MOST FAITHFUL
AND DEVOTED
SUBJECT AND SERVANT,

R. GLOVER.

K I N G
TO THE
G

THIS TRAGEDY

M E D E A
OF

IS
MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED

BY
HIS MAJESTY

MOST DUTIFUL
MOST FAITHFUL
AND DEVOTED
SUBJECT AND SERVANT

R. GLOVER

PROLOGUE.

THOUGH wild our theme, the grave historian's page
Hath sanctify'd the tale through ev'ry age.
Who hath not heard of Argo sent from Greece,
Of Jason's labours for the golden fleece,
And fond Medea's ill-requited aid
To that false hero, who his vows betray'd?
In ev'ry clime, where learned Muses reign,
The stage hath known Medea's mournful strain;
Hath giv'n the flying car, and magic rod
To her, th' avow'd descendant of a god.

The storms of trouble, which afflict the great,
Teach private life to prize its tranquil state.
That truth the moral of our fable shows
Too well in scenes of unexampled woes,
Which here will ravage an exalted breast
Of merit conscious, and with shame oppress;
Where love and fury, grief and madness join'd
O'erturn the structure of a godlike mind.
Pow'r, wisdom, science, and her birth divine
In vain to shield her from distress combine;
Nor wisdom, pow'r, nor science yield relief;
Her potent wand can vanquish all, but grief:
In vain her winged chariot sweeps the air
To shun that mightier sorceress, despair.

The characters and passions hence express
Are all submitted to the feeling breast;
Let ancient story justify the rest.

D R A-

PROLOGUE
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JASON.

ÆSON.

CREON.

LYCANDER.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

FIRST CORINTHIAN.

MEDEA.

THEANO.

HECATÉ.

FIRST PHÆACIAN.

**COLCHIANS, PHÆACIANS, THESSALIANS
and CORINTHIANS.**

The scene is in the citadel of Corinth between a grove sacred to Juno, and the royal palace, with a distant prospect of the sea.

M E-

M E D E A.
A T R A G E D Y.

A C T T H E F I R S T .

S C E N E T H E F I R S T .

LYCANDER seeing THEANO advance from
the temple of J U N O .

THAT form divine, by all rever'd and lov'd,
Moves from the temple. On her pensive brow
Sits holy care with gentleness and grace,
Whose placid beams humanity reveal.
She stops contemplating the sea. Theano—
Why with that musing aspect tow'rd the main
Stand'st thou regardless of thy brother's voice?

T H E A N O .

Imperial Juno in an awful vision
This morn presented to my wondring sight
The shapes of strangers by distress pursu'd;
Whom to the refuge of this holy place
I must receive obedient to her charge:
And lo! a vessel turns her hast'ning prow
To Corinth's harbour.

M E D E A.

L Y C A N D E R.

Ten well-measur'd strokes
Of her swift oars will reach the shore below :
But hear my errand. Creon knows, thy altar
Unclad with garlands still proclaims thy firmness
Against his daughter's marriage ; then prepare
Thy hallow'd eye to meet his threat'ning brow ;
Fence thy chaste ear against his impious vaunts,
Which urge th' example of Almighty Jove
For his own thirst of empire.

T H E A N O.

Say to Creon,
Kings should aspire to imitate the Gods
Not in their pow'r, but goodness ; human virtues
More nigh to Heav'n's perfection may be rais'd,
Than human grandeur : Jove derides the toil
Of mortal pow'r, but smiles on righteous deeds.

L Y C A N D E R.

Thus would I speak, Theano, could my words
And thoughts be tun'd in harmony like thine ;
But danger breaks that union in a palace,
And strains the tongue to discord with the heart :
Then pacify thy goddess, when the king
Exacts my service, if discretion wears
A mask of duty ; kindly thou impute
Blame to my station, and absolve Lycander.

But look ; yon vessel hath discharg'd its train,
Who climb the hill with aged steps and flow.

Nay turn thy eyes ; a second troop of strangers
March through the city. Sable is their garb,
Their mien dejected. This demands my care.
Farewel.

S C E N E

M E D E A,

3

SCENE THE SECOND.
THEANO and COLCHIANS.

THEANO.

What forms are these? All-potent goddess!
I feel thee now; my vision is accomplish'd.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

O thou, who seem'st the guardian of these shades,
Which from the isthmus shew their tow'ring growth,
The sailor's guide through Corinth's double main;
Permit an humble stranger to enquire,
What pow'r is worshipp'd here.

THEANO aside.

The very garb!

The figures painted in my recent vision!

Thy feet, O stranger, stand on sacred earth.
These shades enclose the venerable fane
Erected there to hymeneal Juno,
Whose presence guards the citadel of Corinth.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

Then let us lift our suppliant voice unblam'd,
That in the refuge of this hallow'd grove
Our exil'd feet may rest.

THEANO.

Your suit is granted.
So wills the pow'r inhabiting that temple.
And say, ye favour'd of connubial Juno,
What are your names and country?

FIRST COLCHIAN.

From the banks
Of distant Phasis, and the Euxin wave,
Lost to our native mansions, are we come

Ill-guided Colchians to the walls of Corinth.
 On king Æetes' daughter we attend,
 That boast of Asia, to the Sun ally'd,
 To Hecaté and Circé, more illustrious
 In her own virtues, for her wisdom known
 Through ev'ry clime, the all-endow'd Medea.

T H E A N O.

Where is your princess?

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

In that anchor'd bark,
 Which to your haven from Iolcos sail'd;
 Where on his specious ambassy to Creon
 Her husband left her on a lonely pillow.
 At length impatient of his tedious absence
 She and her sons have brav'd th' unsparing deep.

T H E A N O.

Yet more unsparing, than the deep, is man.
 So will this daughter of affliction find,
 When her sad feet are planted on this shore.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

How swift are evil tidings! While our keel
 But lightly touch'd that well-frequented strand,
 We heard, th' ungrateful Jason would divorce her
 This day to wed the daughter of your monarch.

T H E A N O.

If heav'n prevent not. Through the solemn shade
 Direct thy view. That high-rais'd altar note
 Close by the fountain. Thither lead your princess.
 This is a refuge, which no regal pride
 High-swoln with pow'r, nor multitude inflam'd
 By madding discord, nor invader's rapine

Have

Have e'er profan'd. Return. Yon palace opens.
 No friend of yours approaches. It is Creon.
 Thou too be present, goddess, and illumine
 The earth-born darkness of thy servant's mind.

SCENE THE THIRD.
 THE ANO and CREON.
 CREON entering.

Why do they paint Medea's woes to me?
 A king should lift his steady front on high,
 And, while he gazes on the radiant throne,
 Where bright ambition sits amid the stars,
 The hopes, the fears, the miseries of others
 Pass by unheeded in his contemplation.

Art thou come forth with those ill-omen'd looks
 To blast the public festival?

THE ANO.

Howl, howl,
 Deluded city; banish from thy dwellings
 The genial banquet; fill thy streets with mourners
 To celebrate in notes of lamentation
 A nuptial day offensive to the gods.

CREON.

Think'st thou, thy priestly office can avail
 To counteract the high designs of kings?
 Go and with bridal chaplets deck thy altar,
 Lest thou provoke me to confound thy pride
 Elate with wreaths of sanctity in vain.

THE ANO.

Not, that the holy fillet binds my temples,
 Not, that before the altar I present

The public victim, or a nation's vows
 By me are usher'd to th' eternal thrones,
 Misjudging monarch, is my heart elate;
 It is, that virtue owns me for her servant.
 Benevolence and pity guide my will,
 Beneficence and charity my deeds.
 Ev'n now, though deem'd importunate and proud,
 My soul bows down in heaviness for Creon,
 And at his danger sighs in mournful warnings.

C R E O N.

Repeat thy warnings to the coward's ear.
 My danger?

T H E A N O.

From that goddess, who inspir'd
 The Colchian princess to desert her father,
 To aid the Grecian heroes, and restore
 Our lost possession of the golden fleece.
 The voice of loud complaint from yonder beach
 Already strikes her ear. Medea.

C R E O N.

Ha!

What of Medea?

T H E A N O.

Is arriv'd in Corinth.

C R E O N.

Arriv'd?

T H E A N O.

She and her children to reclaim
 A husband and a father in that prince,
 Whom thou hast destin'd to Creüsa's bed.

C R E-

C R E O N.

Thou, who obtain'st infinity of pow'r,
 Lord of Olympus, king of gods and men,
 Dost thou regard thy scepter'd sons below?
 Say, shall a female hand o'erturn the basis,
 Which I am founding to enlarge my sway?
 If so, resume the diadem, I wear;
 Its scanty circle I reject with scorn.

T H E A N O.

Ye winds, disperse impieties like these;
 Nor let their sound profane the heav'nly threshold.

C R E O N.

Hence to thy temple.

T H E A N O.

Thou defy'st not me,
 But her, whose awful presence fills that temple.
 Imperfect victims, inauspicious off'rings,
 And sounds portentous have foreboded long
 Her high displeasure. Her apparent form
 Stood near my pillow at the op'ning dawn,
 And strictly charg'd me to receive this stranger.
 Think too, what lofty science arms Medea
 With more, than nature's force.

C R E O N.

I think it false,
 And all the fabled wonders of her charms,
 Thy legends too of inauspicious off'rings,
 Imperfect victims, and portentous sounds,
 What priests may publish, and a king despise.

T H E A N O.

Farewel, rash prince. My duty is discharg'd.

C R E-

M E D E A

C R E O N.

Stay. Dost thou mean to give this Colchian refuge?

T H E A N O.

Can I dispute a deity's injunction?

C R E O N.

Go, dream again; procure some wiser vision,
Which may instruct thee to avoid my wrath.

S C E N E T H E F O U R T H.

C R E O N and L Y C A N D E R.

C R E O N.

Where hast thou loiter'd to conceal th' arrival
Of this accurst enchantress, and the purpose
Of thy rebellious sister to protect her?

L Y C A N D E R.

My lord, these tidings are to me unknown;
But further news of high import I bear.
Iolchian Æson, Jason's royal sire,
Advancing now anticipates this notice.

S C E N E T H E F I F T H.

C R E O N, L Y C A N D E R, and Æ S O N
with T H E S S A L I A N S in mourning garments.

C R E O N.

Thrice hail! my double brother. Do I owe
Thy timely presence to our ancient friendship,
Or to th' alarm, Medea's flight might raise,
Who scarce precedes thy fortunate appearance?
My sudden joy o'erlook'd that dusky robe.

Æ S O N.

Æ S O N.

It suits my fortune. Heavy with affliction,
 My weary feet are banish'd from Iolcos.
 How my fell brother, Pelias, that usurper
 Of my paternal sway was foil'd and slain,
 Thou know'st. His son retreated into Thrace;
 Whence he hath pour'd a savage host of ruffians
 With unexpected inroad, and so rapid,
 That instant flight alone preserv'd thy friend,
 Thy suppliant now for aid.

C R E O N.

Dismiss thy cares.

Soon shall thy warlike son display his banners,
 Extend my frontier, and recover thine.
 More of thy fortunes shalt thou tell hereafter;
 But give to gladness this selected day
 Of Jason's nuptials.

Æ S O N.

Nobly thou reliev'st
 A king's distress. Now satisfy the parent.
 Lead me to Jason.

C R E O N.

Follow to my palace.

L Y C A N D E R.

He is not there.

C R E O N.

What say'st thou?

L Y C A N D E R.

On the sands

Alone with melancholy pace he treads,
 As I but now descry'd him from this rock.

C

Æ S O N.

ÆSON.

With melancholy pace?

CREON.

His promise binds him
This very morning to espouse Creüsa.

ÆSON.

Perhaps with fresh calamity o'erworn,
I doubt too much; yet hear me.

CREON.

Thy appearance
Removes all doubts. Lycander, find the prince.
Say, who is come to celebrate his nuptials.

ÆSON to LYCANDER.

Is he a stranger to Medea's landing?

LYCANDER.

I trust, he is.

ÆSON.

They must not meet.

CREON.

Lycander,
See, thou prevent it. Send Theano to us;
And let her bring obedience: else her fault
Shall on thy head be punish'd.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

CREON and ÆSON.

ÆSON.

Should my son
Once see Medea!

CREON.

Can her looks annul

A league like ours?

ÆSON.

M E D E A.

11

Æ S O N.

Alas! thou little know'st her.

Her eye surpasses that refulgent star,
Which first adorns the evening; and her talents
Exceed her beauty. Like the forked thunder
She wields resistless arguments; her words
With more, than lightning's subtlety, are wing'd.

C R E O N.

Why art thou startled?

Æ S O N.

She is there—ascending;
My sight acquainted with her haughty steps
Shrinks, ere they touch the summit of this hill.

C R E O N.

Which is the far-fam'd forcerefs of Colchis?

Æ S O N.

Too well distinguish'd by her stately port,
And elevation o'er that weeping train,
She tow'rs a genuin off-spring of the gods.
Rage on her brow, and anguish in her eye
Denounce the growing tempest of her mind.

C R E O N.

Now, god of waters, since thy partial hand
Thrusts this barbarian outcast on my shores,
Back to thy floods the fugitive I spurn.

Æ S O N.

What means my royal friend? Retire. Avoid
This formidable woman, who may wound
Our dignity. I know her soaring mind,
Which all enlighten'd with sublimest knowledge
Disdains the state and majesty of kings,
Nor ranks with less, than deity itself.

C 2

C R E.

C R E O N.

Curse on her beauty, and majestic mien !
 But let the rumor of her pow'r be true ;
 The Sun, her boasted ancestor, may arm
 Her hand with fire ; let Hecat  and Circ ,
 The goddesses of spells, and black enchantments,
 Attend her steps, and cloath her feet in terror :
 We have our fiends ; the forcerefs shall find,
 That grief, despair, distraction wait our nod
 To wring her heart through all her magic guards.

S C E N E T H E S E V E N T H .

M E D E A, her two CHILDREN, COLCHIANS
 and PH ACIANS.

M E D E A.

No more, I charge you. Noble minds oppress'd
 By injuries disdain the sound of comfort.

Ye fiends and furies wont to leave your flames
 At my command, and tremble at my charms,
 Now, now ascend and aid Medea's rage.
 Give me the voice of thunder to resound
 My indignation o'er the earth and heav'ns ;
 That I, who draw my lineage from the Sun,
 Am fall'n below the basest lot of slaves :
 That anguish, want, despair, contempt and shame
 Are heap'd together by the hands of fate,
 Whelm'd in one mass of ruin on my head,
 And dash my struggling virtue to the ground.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N .

Why to our faithful counsels art thou deaf ?

M E D E A.

Canst thou by counsel waft my exil'd feet
 To my lost parents, my forsaken friends,
 And native palace?—Oh! I gave him all;
 To him my virgin bosom I resign'd,
 For him the regal mansion of my father,
 The lov'd companions of my youth deserted;
 From foul defeat, from shame, from death I sav'd him:
 What more could woman?—Yet he weds another.
 Me he abandons, and these helpless infants
 Forlorn, unshelter'd in a foreign clime,
 To ev'ry outrage, ev'ry want expos'd.

Blast his perfidious head, vindictive lightnings!
 Unhappy woman! canst thou in the height
 Of thy despair, thy rage and indignation,
 Canst thou pursue him with a heavier curse,
 Than to be plung'd in woes, which equal thine?

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Though stung with just resentment, due regard
 Pay to my age, fidelity and service.
 A long and painful traverse from Iolcos
 Hast thou endur'd, nor since thy landing here
 The needful succour known of rest, or food.

M E D E A.

Talk not to me of nourishment and rest.
 Food to these lips, and slumber to these eyes
 Must ever now be strangers.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

By the beams
 Of thy forefather never will I see
 Thy wisdom bound in vassalage to passion.

Once

I

Once more I warn thee, princeſs, to thy refuge.
This is the conſecrated bow'r of Juno,
Thou underneath the hospitable ſhade
Sit ſuppliant down.

M E D E A.

Improvident Medea!
To raiſe another from deſtruction's depths,
To wealth, to glory raiſe him, yet thyſelf
Leave deſtitute and ſuppliant! Oh! what art thou,
Whom blinded men unerring wiſdom call?
Thou couldſt not pierce the thin, the airy veils,
Which from my eyes conceal'd the paths of danger;
Nor canſt thou now repel th' increaſing ſtorm
Of rapid anguiſh, which o'erturns my peace:
Down to the endleſs gloom of dreary night;
Hence, let me drive thee from my inmoſt ſoul.
That nothing calm may hover nigh my heart
To cool its pain, and ſave me from diſtraction.

SCENE THE EIGHTH.
COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS.

A COLCHIAN.

Come on, ye ſoft companions in affliction,
Melodious daughters of Phæacia's iſle;
In ſtrains alternate let us chaunt our grief:
Perhaps our miſtreſs we may charm to reſt.

A PHÆACIAN.

O Muſic, ſweet artifice of pleaſure,
Why is thy ſcience exercis'd alone
In feſtivals, on hymeneal days,
And in the full aſſemblies of the happy?

Ah!

Ah! how much rather should we court thy skill
 In sorrow's gloomy season, to diffuse
 Thy smooth allurements through the languid ear
 Of self-devour'd affliction, and delude
 The wretched from their sadness.

A C O L C H I A N.

Let us melt

In tuneful accents flowing to our woes ;
 That so Medea may at least reflect,
 She is not singly wretched. Let her hear
 Our elegies, whose measur'd moan records
 Our friends forsaken, and our country lost ;
 That she no longer to her sole distress
 Her deep-revolving spirit may confine,
 But by our sorrows may relieve her own.

FIRST PART OF THE MUSIC.

A C O L C H I A N.

[IAMBICS.]

Ye stately battlements and tow'rs,
 Imperial Corinth's proud defence ;
 Thou citadel, whose dewy top
 The clouds in fleecy mantles fold,
 Projecting o'er the briny foam
 An awful shadow, where the might
 Of Neptune urges either shore,
 And this contracted isthmus forms :
 Ah! why your glories to admire
 Do we repining Colchians stand,
 Ill-fated strangers! on the banks
 Of silver-water'd Phasis born.

A P H Æ A C I A N.

[TROCHAICS.]

Pride of art, majestic columns,
 Which beneath the sacred weight
 Of that god's refulgent mansion
 Lift your flow'r-insculptur'd heads;
 Oh! ye marble-channell'd fountains,
 Which the swarming city cool,
 And, as art directs your murmurs,
 Warble your obedient rills:
 You our eyes obscur'd by sorrow
 View unconscious of your grace,
 Mourning still our lost Phæacia,
 Long-remember'd, native isle.

A P H Æ A C I A N.

[IAMBICS.]

O that on fam'd Penëus' banks
 The nymphs of Pelion had bemoan'd
 Their shady haunts to ashes turn'd
 By heav'n's red anger! hateful pines,
 Which form'd thy well-compacted sides,
 O Argo fatal to our peace.
 Thou never then through Adria's wave
 Hadst reach'd Phæacia's blissful shore,
 Nor good Alcinöus the hand
 Of Jason with Medea join'd,
 Nor sent us weeping from our homes,
 Her luckless train, to share her grief.

SECOND PART.

A P H Æ A C I A N.

[TROCHAICS.]

Known recesses, where the echoes
Through the hollow-winding vale,
And the hill's retentive caverns
Tun'd their voices from our songs;
Shade-encircled, verdant levels,
Where the downy turf might charm
Weary feet to joyous dances
Mix'd with madrigals and pipes:
O ye unforgotten pleasures,
Pleasures of our tender youth,
You we never shall revisit,
Ill-exchang'd for scenes of woe.

A C O L C H I A N.

From the polish'd realms of Greece,
Where the arts and muses reign,
Truth and justice are expell'd.
Here from palaces and tow'rs
Snowy-vested faith is fled;
While beneath the shining roofs
Falshood stalks in golden robes.
Dreary Caucasus! again
Take us to thy frozen breast;
Let us shiver on thy ridge,
Ever-during pile of ice
Gather'd from the birth of time!

M E D E A,

A P H Æ A C I A N.

Cheering breeze with sportive pinion
 Gliding o'er the crisped main,
 With our tresses thou shalt wanton
 On our native sands no more.
 Fountains, whose melodious waters,
 Cooling our Phæacian grotts,
 Oft our eyes to sweetest slumber
 With their lulling falls beguil'd;
 We have chang'd your soothing warble
 For the doleful moan of woe,
 And our peaceful moss deserting
 Found a pillow thorn'd with care.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.

J A S O N advancing from the end of the stage;
THEANO on one side, MEDEA in the grove.

T H E A N O.

THE princely steps of Jason are in sight.
He scarce conjectures, that th' indignant breast
Of her, he injures, pours from yonder shades
Its high-ton'd anguish. Yet, illustrious false one,
What stinging thoughts distort thy manly frame!
How have thy gestures lost their wonted grace
In this keen struggle with upbraiding conscience!
Thou soon before that inward judge arraign'd
Shalt hear me plead thy wrong'd Medea's cause.

This is the crisis—— Too complacent hero,
By pride untutor'd, though misled by error,
Thou wilt be calm and gentle to rebuke.

J A S O N.

Pers'd by a father's absolute decree,
Solicited by Corinth's potent lord,
Aw'd with the specious sound of public good,
I have consented, and the hour is nigh.
Oh! in some future hour of sad reflection
May not my heart with self-reproach confess,
This plea of public welfare was ambition;

D z

And

And filial duty was a feeble tie
To authorise the breach of sacred vows.

M E D E A in the grove.

Ungrateful Jason!

J A S O N.

Whence proceeds this voice?

M E D E A in the grove.

O fire of light, thou seest my wrongs.

J A S O N.

Again?

Imagination pregnant with remorse
In sounds unreal yields its birth of terror.

M E D E A in the grove.

Ye arbiters of oaths, and plighted faith,
O Jove and Themis, hear!

J A S O N.

It is a voice!

Resembling hers, when she alas! is far;
No mockery of fancy. (Leans against the scene.

T H E A N O advancing.

On his cheek

Health seems to wither. O'er his shaded sight
The shiv'ring eye-lids close. A creeping tremor
O'erspreads his fading lips, and dewy limbs.
Bless'd be these signals of returning virtue.

Hail! prince. Why stand'st thou listning? What

J A S O N. (alarms thee?

An awful murmur from offended heav'n
Through yonder branches issu'd in a voice,
Which chill'd my spirit, and unnerv'd my strength.

T H E A N O.

What didst thou hear?

J A-

J A S O N.

Medea's well-known accents
Thrice did the vocal prodigy repeat,
Though seas divide her from these faithless arms.

T H E A N O.

There is no need of prodigy. Meer nature
In thy own breast will startle, when thou know'st,
It was Medea's self, who call'd on Jason.

J A S O N.

Herself?

T H E A N O.

The injur'd daughter of Æetes,
But newly-wafted from Theffalia's shore,
Thou may'st discover through those parting boughs;
Where she is seated near the fountain's brink
With her pale cheek reclining on the altar.

J A S O N looking on the grove.

Stern deities of vengeance, and of justice!
Now pass your sentence, Nemesis and Themis!
My ill-wrought web of hated life unravel,
Which was not wove for happiness.

T H E A N O.

Be patient.

J A S O N.

Peculiar woes through ev'ry stage of being
Were Jason's portion. Early I beheld
My father's crown usurp'd. My youth subjected
To an insidious tyrant was devoted
A sacrifice in Colchis—So he hop'd,
And I wish now!—I triumph'd—Glory follow'd,
The source of new calamity to me.

Where is that glory? Serving selfish kings,
Abetting falsehood, perjury and fraud.

THEANO.

Turn thy attention from thy own distress
To feel, what others suffer by thy frailty,
Thy wife and off-spring. Listen.

JASON.

I obey.

THEANO.

How could'st thou lead this all-excelling princess
From clime to clime, th' associate in thy toils,
To fall the victim in a foreign land
Of those unrighteous statutes, which appoint
Imperious husbands masters of divorce;
How think, th' establish'd practice of the Greeks,
Or all, which varnish'd policy might plead,
Could e'er absolve thee from a solemn tie
With such uncommon obligations bound
By those superior, those unwritten laws,
Which honour whispers to the conscious heart?

JASON.

O venerable woman, lend thy aid.

THEANO.

Attune thy fault. Repentance is heroic,
And holds its rank among the manly virtues.

JASON.

Yes, I renounce Creusa, and her kingdom.

Yet see this breast with new-born terror beat.
Not all my trials through unnumber'd dangers,
From monsters, famine, from the raging deep,
And dark-brow'd care have so confirm'd my courage,
But

But that I tremble at th' impending conflict.
I dread that scorn and fury, whose excess
May kill repentance, and provoke destruction.

SCENE THE SECOND.

THEANO, JASON and LYCANDER.

LYCANDER.

The king, Theano, summons thee before him.

THEANO.

What time?

LYCANDER.

This instant.

THEANO.

I obey his pleasure.

JASON.

Thou wilt not leave me.

THEANO.

Thou hast heard this summons.

Heed my last words. Maintain thy just resolves.

Lycander, let thy conduct leave no room

For my reproaches, and the wrath of Juno.

LYCANDER.

Fear not; thy counsels shall be treasur'd here.

SCENE THE THIRD.

JASON and LYCANDER.

LYCANDER.

I see a sudden change. My single charge

I will deliver, and forbear enquiry.

Long have I sought thee, prince. The royal Æson
Is now in Corinth, and will soon accost thee.

J A.

J A S O N.

My father here? Why, multiply distress,
Accumulate perplexity and shame
On my devoted head, ye righteous pow'rs!

L Y C A N D E R.

Prince, he is near; and I return to Creon.

S C E N E T H E F O U R T H.

J A S O N a n d Æ S O N.

J A S O N.

Amaz'd, distracted, tortur'd, I retain
My veneration here. O sacred head,
What from thy peaceful habitation calls
Thy silver hairs to these abodes of woe?
Or com'st thou wrapt in fable to lament
Our mutual errors, and dishonour'd names?

Æ S O N.

Why I am here, why bearing this apparel,
Too soon will Jason know. But first reply;
Why on the sea's waste margin was my son
Observ'd to trace his solitary path;
When Corinth pauses in her gen'ral gladness,
Her choral songs and minstrelsy suspending
For Jason's absence?

J A S O N.

Better she should wait,
Whole ages wait, than justice be suspended,
And the return of honour be unwelcom'd.

Æ S O N.

Can I interpret these mysterious words?

J A-

J A S O N.

Hast thou not heard, my father, that Medea
Weeps in that bow'r, invoking Jove and Themis
To witness what returns, she meets from Jason?

Æ S O N.

What most I dreaded. Then my aged limbs
Must wear these garments still unchang'd, thy country,
Thy friends, thy father's house unceasing mourn.
The woes of exile more severe, than time,
Indent the furrows deeper on these brows.

J A S O N.

The woes of exile?

Æ S O N.

Yes, the race of Pelias
Force me to Corinth. Young Acastus reigns.
The gen'rous Creon promises his aid;
That aid will Jason cruelly prohibit?

J A S O N.

Then we begin to reap the bitter harvest
From seeds, which selfish policy had sown.
When I was hurry'd to these fatal walls,
And, gall'd with jealous fear, Medea left thee;
Heav'n in that period from the roll of fortune
Eras'd our titles, and the with'ring scepter
Shrunk from thy grasp.

Æ S O N.

Nay look not thus entranc'd.
What draws thy eye?

J A S O N.

She rises from the grove,
A Sun disfigur'd by a mist of sorrow

E

Rais'd

Rais'd from our crime. Awake thee—What remains,
 But that we fall before our known protectress,
 Confessing both in Jove's offended sight,
 How much of weak inconstancy hath stain'd
 My name of hero, what ignoble guile
 Disgrac'd thy regal head?

Æ S O N.

And who must save

Iolcos?

J A S O N.

She. Medea's gen'rous wisdom,
 Which in itself contains the strength of armies,
 And quell'd old Pelias, can dethrone the son.

Æ S O N.

What frenzy guides thee? Follow me to Creon.

J A S O N.

Rest thou with me.

Æ S O N.

Inhuman! dost thou covet
 To see my age and dignity revil'd?
 I charge thee, follow.

J A S O N.

Riveted, I wait,

As if congenial with this rock I grew
 From its foundations, till Medea come.

Æ S O N.

Revolver! she is coming— But my eye
 Shall not be far. Remember, thou dost hazard
 Thy country's love, perhaps thy father's too.

SCENE

SCENE THE FIFTH.

JASON *apart*, MEDEA, COLCHIANS
and PHÆACIANS.

JASON.

How shall I face her injur'd worth, how chuse
The most auspicious moment to accost her?

MEDEA.

Why have I science to command the moon,
To draw the spirits from the realms of night,
And trace the hidden pow'rs of baneful nature?
Why am I wise, unless to feel my sorrows
With sharper sensibility, and prove,
How weak is wisdom struggling with despair?

FIRST COLCHIAN.

Its succour yet solicit. Wisdom smoothes
Each thorny path, and Virtue is her sister.

MEDEA.

Old man, be silent. Hath Medea's grief
The leisure now to hear thy moral tale?
No, let me loath my being, curse the Sun,
My bright forefather, and upbraid the heav'ns,
That I was ever born. I will exclaim;
I will demand, ye unrelenting pow'rs,
Why your injustice terrifies the earth
With such an image of distress, as mine.

JASON.

This interview I see in all its terrors;
But further pause will turn suspense to madness.
Medea—I am come

M E D E A.

And dar'st thou come
With that unmatch'd ingratitude and falshood
To face the constant worth, thou now betray'st?

J A S O N.

I come to lay my errors in thy view.

M E D E A.

No, to my view display Creüsa's beauty;
Dwell on her merit, who excels Medea.

J A S O N.

The deity presiding o'er that temple
I call to witness, that my father's pleasure....

M E D E A.

And dost thou urge thy father, thou perfidious?
Thy father!—Oh! that I had been thus wise,
And ne'er forgot the duty of a child.

Thy father gave thee a precarious being,
In its first flight of glory doom'd to fall
Fresh in its prime a victim to oblivion,
Had not I sav'd and borne thee to renown.

J A S O N.

Yes, Jason's life and glory are thy gifts.

M E D E A.

I gave thee too my love, my virgin love,
My friends, my country, my unspotted fame,
My joy, my peace, all, all on thee bestow'd;
What could a father more? Him too my pow'r
Snatch'd from oppression, and his trech'rous brother,
Usurping Pelias slew, that cruel Pelias,
Who on thy youth impos'd the dang'rous toil,
Whence I preserv'd thee— But, my wrath, be still.

In-

Inconstant, base alike, both son and sire
Deserve my scorn.

J A S O N.

Shall contumelious harshness
Blot those perfections from the sun deriv'd,
And not one moment to thy wisdom yield,
That thou may'st hear me?

M E D E A.

No, thou most ingrate
Of all, who e'er forgot their benefactors.
When the fam'd Argo fraught with Grecian princes
Pierc'd with its beak the sandy verge of Phasis,
What daring hand, but mine, their trophies rais'd?
The golden fleece amid th' enchanted grove
Had hung untouch'd beside its scaly guardian;
Wild dogs and vultures had devour'd your limbs;
Your bones had whiten'd on the Colchian strand.
I fearless stept between the narrow bounds,
Which parted your devoted lives from fate,
With mystic spels entranc'd the sleepless dragon,
Bent to the yoke the brazen-footed bulls,
And gave you safety, victory and fame.

J A S O N.

I own thy merits; and the deep remembrance...

M E D E A.

Forever be detested that remembrance.
Curs'd be the skill, which fram'd your fatal bark,
Accurs'd the gale, which fill'd her spreading canvas;
But doubly curs'd the hour, the hour of ruin,
When first I view'd that smiling, trech'rous form,
And fondly trusted to the fair delusion.

O that amid the terrors of enchantment,
 When for thy sake profoundest hell was open'd,
 Some fiend had whirl'd me to the desert pole;
 Or that the earth dividing with my charms
 Low, as her central cavern, had entomb'd me.

J A S O N.

I feel thy anguish, daughter of Æetes,
 Which would o'erwhelm me, had I less to offer,
 Than my repentant heart.

M E D E A.

Thy perjur'd heart
 Foul with ingratitude and guilt. Avaunt,
 And give it thy Creüsa; I despise thee.

J A S O N.

Think, who I am. Though criminal I stand
 And mourn my fault, forget not, I am Jason
 By fame in brightest characters recorded.
 Deserving thy reproaches, I endur'd them;
 But sure the lustre of my name is proof
 Against contempt.

M E D E A.

The recompence of falsehood.

J A S O N.

Hold, I conjure thee!—Nay, I will be heard.

When first I sail'd for Corinth, all my purpose
 Was to establish by a league with Creon
 Th' unstable throne of Thessaly, since crush'd
 By fierce Acastus. Æson's strict injunction
 To wed Creüsa follow'd my arrival;
 When thou wert distant from my sight, and Creon
 Would grant his friendship.

M E-

M E D E A.

31

M E D E A.

But by thy disgrace.

J A S O N.

Impatient woman !

M E D E A.

Could a king's protection
Be rank'd with mine, thou weakly-perjur'd man ?

J A S O N.

Thou shalt not stop me by th' immortal gods !
I will proceed— Intemp'rate passion stifles
Her breathless voice— Oh ! majesty ! Oh ! wisdom !
Oh ! features once divine ! how long shall rage
Despoil your grace ? No other form of beauty,
No qualities, or talents to thy own
Have I preferr'd. By empire's glaring bubble,
By policy's ensnaring voice misled,
Or by mistaken duty to a parent,
I swerv'd from sacred faith. At thy approach
Light flashes through my error ; to thy feet
Contrition brings me, no ignoble suppliant :
The scourge of tyrants, vanquisher of monsters,
Thy instrument of glory, now most glorious,
That he subdues himself, implores thy pardon.
Oh ! unadvis'd !— Obdurate !— While I sue,
Thy unforgiving brow returns disdain.
Think of thy children !

M E D E A.

Traitor, dar'st thou name them ?

J A S O N.

Beware ; destruction with a hunter's speed
Pursues us both. Inextricable snares

Are spreading round us— Ha! be calm— Provoke
 Ill fate no further— Weigh in wisdom's balance
 The pow'rful obligations, which assail'd me.

M E D E A.

Can they be weigh'd with conquest, life and fame,
 The vast profusion of my bounty on thee,
 Thou weak, thou blind, insensible and base?
 No, my superior soul shall stoop no more.
 Though once from foul defeat and death I sav'd thee,
 I will not raise thee from thy grov'ling falshood.
 Let fortune's whole malignity pursue me,
 I and my children wretched, as we may be,
 Outcast, derided by the barb'rous herd,
 Spurn'd by th' un pitying proud, with grim despair,
 With beggary and famine our companions
 Will wander through th' inhospitable world,
 Nor ev'n amidst our complicated woes
 E'er think of thee, perfidious, but with scorn.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

J A S O N and Æ S O N.

J A S O N.

Then let the tempest roar, tyrannic woman,
 The billows rise in mountains o'er thy head.

Æ S O N.

Well, thou hast seen her; while thy father's eye
 Ak'd at the low submission of a hero,
 Who with unmollify'd disdain was spurn'd.
 Say, will my gentle son persist to court

The

The fellowship of fury, and abide
 The acrimonious taunt, the settled frown,
 The still-renew'd upbraiding? Will my Jason
 For this to deathless obloquy abandon
 His name of hero, while his arm rejects
 A proffer'd aid to reinstate his father,
 Redeem his country, and refresh his laurels
 With want of action fading?

J A S O N.

There, O Mars,
 Thou dost provide a banquet for despair.

Æ S O N.

No, for thy valour, son, a feast of glory.
 Come, leave this melancholy spot. Return
 With me to joy.

J A S O N.

I go— but never more
 Speak to thy son of joy. My soul foregoes
 All gentle thoughts. Its sad relief is horror
 From the grim pow'r of homicide and ravage.

O that this ev'ning, lighted by the stars,
 And glimpse of armour, I might turn my back
 On Corinth's bulwarks; that the trumpet's clangor,
 The shrill-mouth'd clarion, and the deep-ton'd horn,
 The groans of slaughter, and the crash of spears
 Might blend their discord for my nuptial song.

F S C E N E

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS from the
grove, and looking on JASON, as he quits the stage.

A COLCHIAN.

[Solemn RECITATIVE.]

Thou, who didst yoke the brazen-footed bulls,
And fearless guide the adamantine plough,
Which Vulcan labour'd, o'er the direful soil
Sown with the serpent's teeth, whence crested helms,
And spears high-brandish'd by the earth-born race
For thy encounter pierc'd the crumbling mold;
Thou conqueror, beware: more dang'rous foes
Doom'd to subdue thee in that palace wait.

A PHÆACIAN.

[TROCHAICS.]

Soft, alluring wiles are there
To seduce thee from the paths
Tro'd by godlike steps alone,
Paths of virtue, paths of praise.
Colchian monsters, Syren's songs
Might thy mortal frame destroy;
These will kill thy glorious name,
Matchless Jason, then beware.

A COLCHIAN.

[Solemn RECITATIVE.]

Thou yet untainted hero, Ah! reflect,
That keenest sorrow, poverty, or pain
Are light and gentle to the bitter darts
Thrice steep'd in gall, which Nemesis directs
Against his bosom, who by merit pass'd

Once

Once drew th'enchanted melody of praise,
Then forfeiting the sweet report of fame
O'er his irrevocable loss repines.

A P H A E A C I A N.

[TROCHAICS.]

Shall the nymphs of Tempe's vale,
Who in rural lays record
Thy persuasive love, that won
Kind Medea to thy aid,
Shall they change th'applauding strain?
Shall the discord of reproach
Wound thy ear accustom'd long
To the music of renown?

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T T H E T H I R D .

S C E N E T H E F I R S T .

T H E A N O and the F I R S T C O L C H I A N .

F I R S T C O L C H I A N .

HOPE in its bud was blasted by her anger.

T H E A N O .

Unhappy anger! but her wrongs are great;
 Nor is my pity less. Instruct me, Colchian,
 Was she not fam'd for hospitable deeds?

F I R S T C O L C H I A N .

Oft hath her known benignity preserv'd
 The Grecian strangers on our barb'rous coast.

T H E A N O .

Yet now a Grecian prince denies her shelter.
 Well, introduce me to her.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N .

Restless anguish

Will soon transport her hither. Look, she comes.
 Here let us watch some interval of calmness.

T H E A N O .

Are those her children?

F I R S T C O L C H I A N .

Yes, from Jason sprung.

T H E .

THEANO.
 They too with intermingling tears enhance
 The piteous scene. Thou fair and stately tree,
 Who once so proudly didst o'ertop the forest,
 What cruel hand despoils thee of thy honours?
 Now dost thou show, as blasted by the lightning,
 With all thy tender branches with'ring round.

SCENE THE SECOND.

THEANO and the FIRST COLCHIAN apart.
 MEDEA, her TWO CHILDREN,
 COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS.

ELDEST CHILD.
 Why fly'st thou from us? Wherefore dost thou frown,
 Whene'er we name, or ask to see our father?

MEDEA.
 You have no father.

ELDEST CHILD.
 When we left Iolcos,
 Didst thou not tell us, he was here in Corinth?
 Now we have pass'd the frightful sea, what hinders,
 But we may find him?

MEDEA.
 Never find him more
 To you a parent, or to me a husband.

ELDEST CHILD.
 Alas! thou weep'st.

MEDEA.
 You too must learn to weep,
 Ye destin'd wand'ers in the vale of mourning.
 Why do you lift your infant eyes to me?

Your

Your helpless mother cannot guard your childhood,
Nor bid neglect and sorrow stand aloof.

I once had parents— Ye endearing names !
How my torn heart with recollection bleeds !
You too perhaps o'erflow your aged cheeks,
Rend from your heads the venerable snow
Oft, as your lost Medea is recall'd,
And for a hapless off-spring mourn like me.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Heart-breaking sorrow now succeeds to rage.
Turn, royal mistress ; see the holy priestess.

M E D E A.

Hail ! most humane.

T H E A N O.

To Juno render praise.

M E D E A.

She owes me refuge. Prompted first by Juno,
I left my native Phasis, and convey'd
Back to her favour'd clime the golden fleece.
Thy part was all humanity.

T H E A N O.

Sage princess,

Hear me divulge the menaces of Creon
To drive thee hence. Expect his presence soon.
Fear not his anger. Warranted by Juno,
By my high function, by my nature more,
I gave thee, I continue my protection.

M E D E A.

Turn to these infants thy benignant looks.
Them to secure from trouble and the terrors,
Which gather closely on the steps of time,

Is all their mother's care; at whose entreaty
Do thou receive their innocence in charge:
But leave Medea to her own protection.

E L D E S T C H I L D.

Our father long hath left us. By thy side,
And in thy bosom we had comfort still.
Wilt thou forsake us?

M E D E A.

We will meet again.
Remove them from me. I can bear no longer
To view those mirrors, which reflect the image
Of my distress, and multiply my pains.

T H E A N O.

Weep not, my children.

M E D E A.

Hide their melting softness;
Lest they dissolve the vigor, which must save them.

[MEDEA continues weeping.]

T H E A N O.

Come, lovely mourners, rest a-while with me.
Come and be practic'd to repeat your vows
For this most wrong'd of mothers. You shall lift
Your blameless hands, sweet supplicants, shall kneel
To nuptial Juno, and to rev'rend Themis,
The arbitress of oaths, and plighted faith.
The dove-like voice of your untainted age,
Thus visited by undeserv'd affliction,
May win their guardian mercy; when the pray'rs
Of man, false man grown reprobate by time
With all the pomp of hecatombs would fail.

SCENE THE THIRD.

MEDEA, COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS.

M E D E A.

Are they withdrawn?

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

They are.

M E D E A.

Then, mighty Spirit,
 Once more at least thy majesty shall blaze
 Such, as thou wert amid th' enchanted wood;
 When thou didst summon hell's reluctant pow'rs,
 And hell obey'd: when dark'ning, from her car
 The moon descended, and the knotted oak
 Bent with thy charms, which tam'd the wakeful dragon,
 And safety gave to demi-gods and heroes.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Behold the king.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

MEDEA, COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS,
 CREON, LYCANDER and attendants.

M E D E A.

Why comes the king of Corinth
 To break upon my sorrows, and to vaunt,
 That his injustice is endu'd with pow'r
 To grieve Medea?

C R E O N.

To debate, weak woman,
 Is thy known province; to command is mine.
 Be seen no longer in the bounds of Corinth.

M E.

M E D E A.

And who art thou, dost give Medea law,
 And circumscribe the slend'rest spot on earth
 Against her passage? Unconfined, as winds,
 I range with nature to her utmost bounds;
 While, as I tread, mankind reveres my steps,
 Its hidden pow'rs each element unfolds,
 And mightiest heroes anxious for renown
 Implore Medea's favour. What is Creon,
 Who from the sun's descendant dares withhold
 The right to hospitality and justice?

C R E O N.

Not of the number, who revere thy steps,
 Or supplicate thy favour; one, whose scepter
 Forbids thy residence in Greece. Away;
 Range through the snows of Caucasus; return
 To Pontic desarts, to thy native wilds:
 Among barbarians magnify thy deeds.
 This land admits no wand'rer like Medea,
 Who with a stranger from her father fled,
 Fled from her country, and betray'd them both.

M E D E A.

With him I fled, whom thou wouldst foully draw
 Through blackest treason to thy daughter's bed;
 And for the rest, if equity, or wisdom
 Were Creon's portion, I would plead before him:
 But vindicate my actions to a robber,
 Who basely watch'd my absence to purloin
 My only wealth! my lofty soul disdains it.

C R E O N.

Hence, while thou may'st, rash woman, ere thou prove,
 How strong the awful image of the gods

Is stamp'd on monarchs, and thou feel my wrath
Swift in destruction like the bolt of Jove.

M E D E A.

Dost thou recount thy fables to Medea,
The idiot tale, which cheats the gaping vulgar,
To her, who knows the secret source of things?
Behold this comely image of the gods.

This violator of the holiest ties,
Whom the dull hand of undiscerning chance
Hath deck'd in purple robes, and pageant gold,
Resembles much the majesty of heav'n.

C R E O N.

Thy bare expulsion shall not now atone.
I will stand forth th' avenger of Æetes
On his false daughter; for thy crimes in Colchis
Vindictive furies in this distant region,
Shame, chastisement and insult shall o'ertake thee,
Spoil that fair body, humble that fell heart;
Till, as with bitt'rest agony it breaks,
Thou curse its wild temerity, which brav'd
The pond'rous hand of majesty incens'd.

M E D E A.

Ha! thou vain boaster, hast thou yet to learn,
That I can rock the iron throne of Pluto;
Can waft thee struggling to Rhiphæan crags,
Where thou shalt rave and foam and gnash thy teeth;
Where frost shall parch thee, where the clouds shall scat-
Their storms around thee, whirl in sportive air [ter
Thy gorgeous robe, thy diadem and scepter?
While I— Oh! fruitless, unsubstantial pow'r!
Must still continue wretched— Oh! vain threat!

Hath

Hath he not torn my Jason from these arms?
 What then avails the knowledge of my mind?
 Stretch'd on the rack of anguish is my heart.
 What spark of wisdom in my breast remains?
 All is extinguish'd there—Oh! Jason! Jason!

[Is supported by her women.]

C R E O N to L Y C A N D E R.

Thou seest the haughty forcerefs abash'd
 Before a monarch's persevering frown.

L Y C A N D E R aside.

Most injur'd woman!

C R E O N.

Go, transport her hence,
 Ere she revive.

L Y C A N D E R.

The multitude already
 Begin to murmur; were this holy place
 Defil'd by force, their zeal would swell to madness.
 Perhaps this princess for her wisdom fam'd
 May be persuaded to abandon Corinth.
 And she revives with milder looks.

M E D E A aside.

Pride, pride,
 For once be wise; in lowliness disguise thee,
 That thou may'st rise to vengeance. King of Corinth,
 I only crave three hours to quit thy borders.

C R E O N to L Y C A N D E R.

If she exceed that slender space of time,
 Force shall remove her from my loathing sight.

LYCANDER to MEDEA, while CREON is going.
 This contest, princess, thou hast wisely clos'd.
 Three hours elaps'd, expect me to return
 Thy safe conductor to the kingdom's frontier.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

MEDEA, COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

Thou dost not droop. This tyrant's empty threats
 Thy very breath could dissipate like clouds,
 Which for a-while some hideous form assume,
 Then pass away dissolv'd to fleeting vapor.
 I too will aid thee. By thy father's sister
 I was held dear, by Circé, pow'rful queen,
 Who taught me various spels and incantations.

M E D E A.

Go then, and bring my wand, that potent rod,
 Which grew a branch of ebony o'er shading
 The throne of Pluto; sever'd thence, and dipt
 Thrice in the cold of Lethe's sleepy waters
 By Hecaté on Circé was bestow'd,
 By her on me to still the winds and floods,
 Night's drowsy curtains o'er the sky to draw,
 And all its active fires entrance to rest.

Leave us apart. Retire, my faithful virgins,
 Who share so kindly in Medea's woes.
 I would not pierce your gentle hearts with terror.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

MEDEA and the FIRST COLCHIAN.

M E D E A waving her wand.

First rise, ye shades impervious to the light;
 And you, ye sable-skirted clouds, descend:
 Us and our mystic deeds with night surround.

[The stage is darken'd.

[IAMBICS.]

Thou, by whose pow'r the magic song
 Charms from its orb th' unwilling moon,
 Controls the rapid planet's speed,
 And dims the constellation's fires;

While founding torrents stop and sleep,
 While fountain-nymphs in dread withhold
 Their mazy tribute from the meads,
 And stiff'ning serpents hear and die;

Terrific deity, whose name,
 And altar stain'd with human blood
 On Tauric cliffs the Scythian wild,
 And fell Sarmatian tribes adore;

[TROCHAICS.]

Wreath'd in snakes, and twining boughs
 Gather'd from infernal oaks,
 Which o'er Pluto's portal hung
 Shed a second night on hell;

In thy raven-tinctur'd stole,
 Grasping thy tremendous brand,
 With thy howling train around,
 Awful Hecaté, ascend.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

By the pitchy streams of Styx,
 Lethe's mute and lazy flood,
 By the deathful vapor sent
 From Avernus' steaming pool;
 By th' eternal sigh, which heaves
 With Cocytus' mournful wave,
 By the Phlegethontic blaze,
 Direful goddess, hear and rise.

[IAMBICS.]

Or if, where discord late hath heap'd
 Her bloody hecatombs to Mars,
 Thou sweeping o'er the mangled slain
 Dost tinge thy feet in sanguin dew;
 Ah! leave a-while the vulture's shriek,
 The raven croaking o'er the dead,
 The midnight wolf's insatiate howl,
 And hither turn thy solemn pace.

The winds in magic horror bound
 Shall at thy presence cease to breathe,
 No thunder-teeming cloud approach,
 The hoarse and restless surge be dumb.

M E D E A.

No more. The strong-constraining spel hath tam'd
 The restif blast; the pliant leaves are fix'd;
 The fountains rest; th' oblivious birds are hush'd;
 And dead the billows on the silent beach.
 Begone— She comes— I feel the rocking ground.
 Its entrails groan— Its shiv'ring surface parts.
 Scarce can Æetes' child the sight endure.

S C E N E

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

MEDEA, and HECATÉ rising in long, black garments, with a wreath of snakes, and oaken boughs on her head, and a torch in her hand.

M E D E A.

O my propitious and congenial goddess,
Who thy mysterious science hast diffus'd
Of potent herbs, and necromantic songs
Through my capacious bosom; who so long
Hast been assistant to Medea's triumphs,
Now thou behold'st me vanquish'd by despair.

H E C A T É.

I know thy suff'rings, daughter; but to close
The wounds of anguish, and assuage despair
Is not the task of hell.

M E D E A.

Then give me vengeance.

H E C A T É.

On whom?

M E D E A.

Creüsa?—No— My high revenge
O'erleaps a trifling maid. Old Æson?—No.
He is my hero's father. But for Creon. . . .

H E C A T É.

The hour is nigh, when yonder flood will rage,
This rock be loosen'd, and its structures nod;
Then shall the fury, discord, and red zeal
Thrice steep'd in Stygian fires avenge thy wrongs.
Farewel.

M E.

M E D E A.

M E D E A.

A moment stay— My yielding heart
Must ask— Will Jason ever more be kind?

H E C A T É.

Search not thy fate.

M E D E A.

Unfold it, I enjoin thee
By him, thou dread'st, by Demogorgon's name.

H E C A T É.

Against thyself, unhappy, thou prevail'st.
Ere night's black wheels begin their gloomy course,
What, thou dost love, shall perish by thy rage;
Nor thou be conscious, when the stroke is giv'n:
Then, a despairing wand'rer, must thou trace
The paths of sorrow in remotest climes.

S C E N E T H E E I G H T H.

M E D E A.

Destroy my love! By me shall Jason die?
Oh! insupportable! O pitying Juno!
Assist me sinking to the ground with anguish.

S C E N E T H E N I N T H.

M E D E A on the ground, COLCHIANS
and PHÆACIANS.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N entring.

The streaming purple of the western Sun
Glow on these tow'rs and pinnacles again,
Prevailing o'er the darkness, which the wand
Of our sage mistress rais'd— Dejecting sight!

Thy

Thy faithful servant can refrain no longer,
But tears must wash the furrows of his cheeks.

M E D E A.

Ah! how much more my eyes should stream in torrents!
Ah! how much stronger should my bosom heave,
And sound its agonies in bitter groans
To the remorseless gods! Destroy my Jason!

[Starting up.

The dear, false hero! Perish first my art.

F I R S T P H Æ A C I A N.

How oft have perjur'd lovers been recall'd
By strong enchantment? Check these vain complaints.
Hast thou not magic to constrain this wand'rer
Back to thy arms?

M E D E A.

I have, but scorn the arts,
Which may command his person, not his love.
No, fly to Jason. Let the only charm
Be soft persuasion to attract him hither.

O he is gentle, as the summer's breeze,
With looks and gestures fashion'd by the graces.
The messenger be thou, discreet and good.
Medea's pride shall stoop.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

I go—though hopeless.

[Aside.

M E D E A.

Mean time will I to yonder wood return,
And some deep-shaded receptacle chuse.
There, wrapt in darkness, shall my suff'ring soul
The sense of all its injuries disburthen
In secret murmurs, till its rage be spent.

H

S C E N E

SCENE THE TENTH.
COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS.
A COLCHIAN.

[CRETICS.]

Native floods rough with ice,
Rushing down mountain-fides,
Whirling thence broken rocks;

[TROCHAICS.]

Your discordant waves, that sweep
Harshly o'er their flinty beds,
Yield a more alluring sound,
Than the gently-trilling notes
Of the tender Grecian lyre,
Or the swelling strain diffus'd
From the music-breathing flute.

[CRETICS.]

Native groves hoar with frost,
Caverns deep fill'd with night,
Shagged cliffs, horror's seat;

[TROCHAICS.]

Oh! to these desiring eyes
Lovely is your gloom, which lives
In remembrance ever dear.
You are brighter, than my thoughts,
Which despondency o'erclouds,
And in these perfidious climes
Expectation cheats no more.

M E D E A.

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A P H Æ A C I A N.

[CRETICS.]

Torrents swell, tempests rage,
Danger frowns, pain devours,
Grief consumes, man betrays;

[TROCHAICS.]

Such our doom in ev'ry clime :
Yet among the thorns of life
Hope attends to scatter flow'rs ;
And Credulity, her child,
Still with kind imposture smooths
Heaving trouble, and imparts
Moments, which suspend despair.

[CRETICS.]

Goddeſs bland, ſoothing hope,
In thy ſmile I confide,
And believe, Jaſon comes.

[TROCHAICS.]

All, I ſee, delights my eye ;
Ev'ry ſound enchants my ear ;
Thoſe rude-featur'd crags are gay ;

[Turning to the ſea.]

Winds in notes harmonious blow ;
Hoarſeſt billows murmur joy ;
And my long-forſaken home
Wakes the plaintive muſe no more.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

 A C T THE F O U R T H.

S C E N E THE F I R S T.

J A S O N and the F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

J A S O N.

WHY am I summon'd?

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

But once more to greet her.

J A S O N.

And be the mark of scorn.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Remind thee, hero,

Of all thy gen'rous labours ne'er deny'd,
 But oft repeated to restore the wretched.
 Shall thy distress'd Medea be the first,
 Thou dost refuse to aid?

J A S O N.

It is too late.

She cast me from her, and we now are strangers.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

I have been long a traveller with time,
 And through unnumber'd evils have I noted
 Those born of anger to be most deplor'd.
 Thou look'st no longer on that mutual care,
 Your children's welfare. In the wrathful Jason

Be-

Benignity is lost, ev'n nature dead
In the fond father.

J A S O N.

When I nam'd our children,
Her ear was deafen'd, and her scornful tongue
Was sharpen'd into outrage.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

See them here,
The lively patterns of their mother's graces,
And sharers in misfortune.

S C E N E T H E S E C O N D.

J A S O N, the F I R S T C O L C H I A N
and the C H I L D R E N.

E L D E S T C H I L D.

Art thou found
At last, my father? In thy search we pass'd
Through frightful waters, and in roaring winds.
Come to our mother, who of thee complains;
And with a promise never more to leave us
Speak comfort to her.

J A S O N.

Comfort!

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Dost thou shrink
To see these pledges of a love like hers?
Oh! thou obdurate, who hast thrown the beauties
Of virtue from thee in thy youthful season,
When ev'ry soft sensation is most warm,
To clasp the cold deformity of guilt!
I have no off-spring— Must an old man's eyes

I

Teach

Teach thine their tender lesson? Must a heart,
Which time and ills and care might well have fear'd,
Teach thee affection, and a parent's feeling?

J A S O N.

Support me rather, than depress me, Colchian.
I sink— My soul dissolving in affection
Hath quite unmann'd me.

E L D E S T C H I L D.

Dost thou grieve to see us?

J A S O N.

No, my poor boys. My spirit bows before you
In love and rev'rence. These indeed subsist
A common care exacting all regard.
What shall I say?— Not cruel would I seem,
Not ev'n severe— Yet, Colchian, let me ask;
Will she

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Command her; she is all submission.

J A S O N.

Amid the woes of separating parents
Who like the father can protect the off-spring?
Will she commit them to my charge, that comfort,
Prosperity and honour be their portion?

E L D E S T C H I L D.

Ah! do not take us from our mother's arms.

Y O U N G E S T C H I L D.

From our kind mother. Leave us.

E L D E S T C H I L D.

Leave us here

To weep with her.

J A S O N.

How constant are these children!

But they were never harass'd by her scorn.

S C E N E T H E T H I R D.

J A S O N, the C H I L D R E N, M E D E A,
C O L C H I A N S and P H Æ A C I A N S.

M E D E A stopping short.

The man, who knew, and yet despis'd my worth,
 I see before me— Still, thou restif heart,
 Still dost thou rise tumultuous in my bosom?
 Oh! thou must bend.

J A S O N.

Well, daughter of Æetes;
 Lo! I am here obedient to thy call.

M E D E A.

Once was the time, when Jason would have come
 Uncall'd, unprompted, but by love alone.
 Why do I bring the wasted glass of joy
 Back to my view!— Oh! torture of remembrance!
 Oh; Jason! Jason!

J A S O N.

Speak.

M E D E A.

I cannot speak.

J A S O N aside.

My spirit yields— this mute distress o'erwhelms me.

M E D E A.

Is it decreed to separate thy name
 From mine for ever?— First to all restore me,
 Which I relinquish'd for thee, to my country,

The

The veneration, which that country paid me,
My injur'd parents, and their lost affection.
To my untainted, virgin fame restore me,
My once untroubled, unrepublishing thoughts.
Impossible— Then hear, and yet be just.

J A S O N aside.

Oh! that this morning she had thus address'd me!

M E D E A.

Not love alone, not Hymen's common ties,
But fame and conquest, mutual toils and hardships,
All, which is marvellous and great, conspir'd
To make us one. What stars in distant skies,
What seas, what shores unvisited before
Have we not seen together? And what perils
Could each inhospitable clime present,
From which Medea hath not sav'd her Jason?
Our toils at length surmounted, must we part?
My lord— My husband— Father of these boys!
Shame, anguish, desperation rush upon me!
They bind my heart in adamant woe!
They weigh me down— They bear me to the earth.

[Kneeling with the children.]

Thus low behold the issue of the Sun
Imploring pity of the man, who scorn'd her.

J A S O N.

Canst thou, O Juno, from thy neighb'ring temple
View this illustrious sufferer at my feet,
Nor swift destruction from thy altar show'r
On my perfidious head? Why rather, goddess,
Who hast thy thunder like thy husband, Jove,
Didst thou not blast me, when, by furies guided,
I ratify'd but now th' unhallow'd contract?

M E.

M E D E A rising.

What hast thou said?

J A S O N.

Creüsa— is my wife.

[He starts at Medea's looks, then fixes his eyes stedfastly upon her, and after some time proceeds.]

Medea— Ha! Have sense and motion left her?
 Her colour dies, which once outshone the morn.
 Those radiant eyes, whose majesty proclaim'd
 The Sun's own progeny, withdraw their lustre.

Oh! thou most injur'd, utter thy complaints;
 Give words to anger, and to sorrow tears.

M E D E A.

Astonishment! What prodigy is there?
 Look yonder.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Go— go, children, to the temple;
 Avoid this fight.

[The children are led off by a Phæacian to the temple.]

M E D E A.

What wonderful appearance
 Floats on the main, and stems the lofty surge?

J A S O N.

O execrable perfidy! which fills
 The loveliest eyes with tears, the noblest heart
 With pangs, the most enlighten'd mind with madness.

M E D E A.

See, where yon snowy concave in its bosom
 Collecting all the motion of the winds
 Drives the huge burthen to th' affrighted shore.

J A S O N.

O had the flood, she sees in frantic thought,
Ingulph'd that bark!

M E D E A advancing towards him.

What art thou, most presumptuous,
Who dar'st approach the limits of this region?
Hast thou not heard, that bulls with brazen feet,
And sleepless dragons guard the fatal soil?

He hears unterrify'd—I ne'er beheld
Such majesty and grace.

J A S O N.

Debas'd, deform'd
By guilt's polluting hand!

M E D E A.

He speaks—What music!
He claims the golden fleece—What means this warmth,
Which prompts my hand to give the radiant prize?
But wilt thou prove then constant—ever kind?
I must, I will believe thee.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

What remorse,
What consternation petrify his frame!
And she grows wilder.

M E D E A.

Hark. With flaming throats
The bulls begin to roar. The forest trembles.
And see, the dragon hither points his course.
See, his huge pinions beat the tortur'd air.
His monstrous body rolls the blast before him,
And sails amidst a whirlwind. Dost thou droop?
Be not dismay'd, my hero. Stand behind.

Attend,

Attend, ye demons, whose contagious breath
Defiles the sun, who chill the fiercest heart,
And lock in drowfy sloth the nerves of strength.

J A S O N.

Assume thy terrors— Moulder me to dust.
Now call thy demons, whose infernal grasp
May snatch and hurl me to my destin'd pains.
Let me be stretch'd on torn Ixion's wheel,
Or chain'd in burning adamant endure
The tooth of vipers, and the scorpion's sting;
Oh! rather, rather, than behold thy suff'rings.

M E D E A.

Why art thou pale and languid? Thou art safe.
The slumb'ring monster drops his scaly wings.
Thine is the fleece— Medea too is thine.

[Jason throws himself back, and is
receiv'd by the Colchians.]

Confusion and amazement!— Is he vanish'd?
Where am I?— On a rock, a desert cliff,
Which overhangs the unfrequented waves;
No plant, but moss, to hide its craggy sides;
No shelter nigh my tempest-beaten head:
And lo! two infants clinging to my knees,
Who join my grief, and call Medea mother.

O thou false hero, whither art thou fled?
Hark— The wind only answers my complaint,
It is the sea, which murmurs to my groans.

Ha! what art thou, grim shape embru'd with gore?
Why dost thou wave that Stygian torch around?
Art thou Revenge from Tartarus enlarg'd
To aid Medea? Come then, shake thy brand

Before my steps. To perpetrate thy mischief
The winds shall lend their swiftneſs, hell its fiends,
The ſea its fury, and the Sun his flames.

SCENE THE FOURTH.

JASON and the FIRST COLCHIAN.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

Reſume thy courage.

JASON.

Yes, my ſoul emerges
From dark confuſion, now ſhe knows the worſt.
My ſight is clear'd, my enterpriſe reſolv'd,
And hope enlarges my advent'rous ſpirit.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

I hear in wonder, prince. At leaſt prepare thee
To guard Medea in her new diſtreſs,
Whom Creon threatens to expel.

JASON.

The prieſteſs
Will be her ſafeguard, till . . .

FIRST COLCHIAN.

Reſtrain thy ſpeech,
And look behind thee. He is ſent from Creon
To drive her hence.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

JASON, the FIRST COLCHIAN
and LYCANDER.

JASON.

Lycander!

M E D E A.

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L Y C A N D E R.

Prince, allow me
With this old Colchian to confer a moment.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Nay, speak aloud.

L Y C A N D E R.

Thou know'st my errand, Colchian.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Yes, if our princess willingly depart not,
Thou wilt by force remove her.

J A S O N.

Base and impious!
Now should these hands, which yok'd the brazen bulls,
Divide thy limbs, and hurl the mangled fragments
From yonder promontory's brow to feast
The scaly monsters in the flood below;
It were a righteous sacrifice to justice:
But thou art brother to the good Theano.

L Y C A N D E R.

Whom thou dost wrong in me. By her consent,
And on Medea's promise to depart,
I came to guide her with respectful care
To Corinth's verge. Compassion for this princess,
Dread of the king, and rev'rence for the goddess,
With all thy changes, prince, perplex my course;
That through the maze of this eventful day
I ne'er shall tread securely.

J A S O N.

Nay, Lycander,
If thou art blameless

L Y.

LYCANDER.

Stop. The king is here
To widen this confusion.

SCENE THE SIXTH.

JASON, the FIRST COLCHIAN,

LYCANDER, CREON and attendants.

CREON entering.

I am told;
That with a pensive mien he left the palace,
And join'd a Colchian of Medea's train.
Gods! he is here— disorder'd— with Lycander
And that old stranger— all in fullen silence
At my appearance— Jason— He replies not.
What are your consultations? Speak, Lycander.

LYCANDER.

My liege, I cannot, uninform'd like thee.

CREON.

Then, as a king and father, I demand
Of thee, Theffalian hero, why, confus'd
At my approach, thy countenance is fall'n?

JASON.

At thy approach? More formidable pow'rs
Could never awe this heart, which nought hath van-
But its own frailties. [quish'd,

CREON.

Visions.

JASON.

Hear with patience.
The tutelary deity of Corinth
Sits here in awful judgment. Virtue pleads,

I

And

And pity weeps before her. Thou and I
 At this tribunal show our guilty heads.
 Long have we slumber'd on the couch of folly;
 Let us awaken from the cheating dream,
 Nor each rebuke the other for his weakness,
 But acquiesce in Juno's just decree.
 I must annul my contract with thy daughter,
 And bid her now eternally farewell.

C R E O N.

Eternally farewell? I dream— Lycander,
 Is not Medea gone?

L Y C A N D E R.

My lord, the time . . .

C R E O N.

Inactive traitor! Go and seize that fiend.

J A S O N to C R E O N.

Hold. Thou esteem'st me still the gentle Jason,
 The pliant vassal of my father's will,
 And thy ambition. I am chang'd— My heart
 Is full of tumult— New-created rage,
 Rage at myself, at Æson too and thee
 Now ravages my bosom— Then be counsell'd,
 Nor tempt the wild, ungovernable transports
 Of one distemper'd with a foul assemblage
 Of guilt, despair and shame.

C R E O N.

Presumptuous boy!

Do thy exploits by forcery atchiev'd,
 Do thy rude trophies from barbarians won
 Exalt thy pride to brave a Grecian monarch?
 When now, from all inheritance expell'd,

A

A needy exile, thou hast no support,
But from my throne, whose patronage is granted
To thy imploring father.

J A S O N.

I reject it,

And own no patron, but my sword and name.
Can I want aid, the Argonautic leader?
While Hercules, while Telamon and Peleus,
While sacred Orpheus, and the twins of Leda
Remain unconquer'd to assert my cause.

Why do I measure folly back to folly,
And here degrade my honours and renown
With boasts resembling thine? Farewel forever.

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

LYCANDER, CREON and attendants.

CREON.

Ha! I perceive his purpose. Haste, collect

[To one of his attendants.

A faithful band; secure Medea's vessel.

Ye blackest demons of resentment, rise;
March by my side, and brandish you my scepter.

[To another of his attendants.

Thou shut the city-gates. Let none depart
Without my licence. I will hold him still,
And cast him prostrate at Creüsa's feet.

SCENE THE EIGHTH.

LYCANDER, CREON, attendants and THEANO.

THEANO.

I heard thy threat'ning voice, O blindly fix'd
In disobedience to the queen of gods.

C R E.

C R E O N.

Dar'st thou, sole auth'ress of thy sov'reign's ills,
Confront his anger? First on thee, confed'rate

[To Lycander.

With this rebellious, shall my vengeance fall.
By thy design'd misconduct Jason twice
Hath seen Medea.

L Y C A N D E R.

Chance, or heav'n's appointment,
Not my contrivance. . . .

C R E O N.

Seize and drag him hence;
Low in a dungeon hide him; chain him down
In damps and darkness.

L Y C A N D E R.

Citizens of Corinth,
This place is holy. In the name of Juno
I claim protection.

T H E A N O.

Universal rev'rence
From your forefathers at the birth of Corinth
Hath guarded still th' inviolable grove.

C R E O N.

Do ye recoil, ye cowards? Rebel, traitor,
I will assemble those, shall force this refuge,
The seat of priestly craft to aid sedition;
When thou in torture shalt atone thy crime.

T H E A N O.

Once more I warn thee to revere a goddess.

C R E O N.

No, I revere a god, the god of thunders.
Jove, thou did'st toil for empire; so shall Creon,

K

And

And show the earth a pattern of thy sway.
 For empire thou thy father did'st dethrone,
 Thy Titan kindred plunge in deepest hell.
 The giant lancing from his hundred hands
 A hundred rocks to shake th' Olympian tow'rs
 Thou didst with labour vanquish. Shall these shades,
 Which awe the vulgar, shall the ready prey
 To ev'ry firebrand, or the woodman's ax
 Obstruct a king? No, insolent revolvers,
 Soon shall you see me lift the bloody scourge
 Of chastisement, unsheathe the sword of havoc,
 And vindicate my glory.

T H E A N O.

Impious man!

S C E N E T H E N I N T H.

L Y C A N D E R and T H E A N O.

T H E A N O.

Do thou consult thy safety.

L Y C A N D E R.

Be not anxious.

The king's own rashness shall secure Lycander.
 Though years may roll on years, ere we again
 Shall meet in peace.

S C E N E T H E T E N T H.

L Y C A N D E R, T H E A N O and J A S O N.

J A S O N.

Medea to thy temple
 Is fled from all her virgins, who entreat
 Thy kind permission to pursue her steps,
 Where'er her frenzy leads.

T H E.

T H E A N O.

My help is ready.

And to thy guardian care I trust my brother,
Whom Creon threatens with immediate death.

Yet something whispers, something sure divine,
That other clouds of black events will break,
Ere a new morning rise on troubled Corinth,
And we surviving each portentous storm
Derive a sad security from horror.

S C E N E T H E E L E V E N T H.

L Y C A N D E R a n d J A S O N.

L Y C A N D E R.

Whate'er this mystic language may import,
Prince, give attention.

J A S O N.

Speak.

L Y C A N D E R.

Thy only course
Is to embark from Corinth with Medea.

J A S O N.

It was my secret and determin'd purpose.

L Y C A N D E R.

Nor yet a secret. Our suspicious tyrant,
If he could rule his discontented subjects,
Would stop thy passage. But thy just design
The public shall befriend by me alarm'd
At Creon's threat to violate the grove.

J A S O N.

Can I requite thee?

L Y C A N D E R.

Let me serve thee first;
Requite me after, as my wants may dictate.
Is not thy father yonder?

J A S O N.

Let him come.
Go and expect me shortly on the beach.

S C E N E THE TWELFTH.

J A S O N and Æ S O N.

Æ S O N.

What have I heard? Th' exasperated king

J A S O N.

Hath told thee truth. His daughter I relinquish,

Æ S O N.

Off with this bridal pageantry, which mocks
With gay delusion my disastrous age.
Reach me again my fable; from thy hand
I will receive it: from thy barb'rous hand
Let dust be sprinkled on my joyless head;
Nay, rather turn invincible against me;
Lock in that nervous gripe these snowy hairs;
And to the hov'ring eagles on the beach
Cast my disfigur'd reliques. Dost thou pause?
Think'st thou, that Jason's father will be seen
Decrepit, tott'ring with distress and years,
A vagabond, a suppliant for protection
Among the happier princes? No, my son,
Though not like thee the faulchion I can wield,
And mow my foes before me, I can die.

J A S O N.

[deſs,

Com'ſt thou with threat'nings? That tremendous god-
 Whoſe piercing eye from yonder fane diſcerns
 Guile in its naked ſhape through ev'ry garb,
 And marks ingratitude for ſignal vengeance,
 Knows, that we merit both to die: yet, dying,
 We could not expiate our unmatch'd offence.

Æ S O N.

What unaccuſtom'd, terrifying ſternneſs
 Frowns on that aſpect? Gentle have I known thee
 From infancy to manhood, ne'er before
 Have felt thee dreadful.

J A S O N.

Ever from thy fears
 Wilt thou take counſel? Can the voice of pity,
 Benevolence and equity convey
 No admonition? O exalt thy thoughts
 From this baſe earth, the manſion of deceit,
 Of perjuries and crimes. Erect thy viſage
 To Themis heav'n-thron'd patroness of juſtice.
 Invoke her aid, that, ſtrengthen'd, thou may'ſt hear,
 Nor be confounded at thy ſon's reſolves.
 By no perſuaſion, artifice, or menace
 My now-reviving dignity of mind
 From its own ſummit ſhall again deſcend.

Æ S O N.

What would my Jaſon?

J A S O N.

Take the holy prieſteſs;
 Repair to Creon: with united counſels
 Him firſt from impious violence diſſuade:
 And then

Æ S O N.

Æ S O N.

To whose protection must I fly?

J A S O N.

To mine. Abandon Corinth, and at Thebes
 Not three day's march from these detested gates
 Expect my presence. Hercules is there,
 My friend, my soldier. He with ev'ry hero,
 Who once obey'd my standard, will again
 League their auxiliar swords and save Iolcos.
 Let this suffice— If not— Persist no more.
 Thy son is fix'd immoveable, as fate.

Æ S O N.

[Thunder.

Thy mightier genius awes me. I submit.
 We all are guilty— Juno so proclaims.
 But Oh! amid these prodigies, my Jason,
 Not one alarms me like the rude commotion,
 Which shakes thy placid bosom. Be compos'd.
 I will conduct Theano to the king.

SCENE THE THIRTEENTH.

J A S O N turning towards the temple.

Look down, connubial goddess, and with hope
 Let thy appeas'd divinity indulge
 A hero off'ring at thy holy shrine
 His spirit humbled with repentant sighs.

You too attend, ye favourable gales,
 And swiftly waft us to the kind embrace
 Of our companion, Orpheus; who shall breathe
 His tuneful consolation in a strain
 Of grief-composing energy to charm

Distraction's rage, till new-born reason smile.
 Then with her children lovely, as the mother,
 Shall blooming Tempé on its flow'ry lap
 Again receive her; while Penéus' stream
 Blends with the flitting warblers on his banks
 His murm'ring cadence to delight her ear:
 And I once more along th' accustom'd vale
 Shall by the lustre of the silent moon
 Walk by her side attentive, while her tongue
 Unfolds the pow'rs of heav'n's resplendent train,
 Of magic numbers, and mysterious spels,
 And feasts with knowledge my enraptur'd soul.

SCENE THE FOURTEENTH.
 COLCHIANS.

[IAMBICS.]

Sire of Æetes, god rever'd
 By our forefathers on their sands
 Bleach'd by the Euxin's restless foam,
 Effulgent origin of day;
 Who with illimitable view,
 As from the amber-portal'd east
 Thy courfers fiery-man'd proceed,
 See'st the deep-bosom'd woes of men;

[TROCHAICS.]

Whether plac'd in mildest climes,
 Or beneath thy sultry wheels,
 Whether freezing near the pole,
 All the various race of care.

[IAMBICS.]

[IAMBICS.]

Yet to thy sad paternal eye
Can this diversity of grief
Not one present through all thy course
To match thy own Medea's pain.
Lo! ev'ry flow'r of wisdom fades
Within her large and fertile breast,
A desert now by tempests rang'd,
The seat of wild discordant thoughts.

[TROCHAICS.]

God of wisdom and of light,
O relume her darken'd soul!
Let her, though begirt with ills,
Still thy progeny be known.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T

A C T THE F I F T H.

S C E N E THE FIRST.

T H E A N O descending from the temple,
Æ S O N and C O L C H I A N S.

Æ S O N.

W H E R E is the priestess, Colchian?
F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

There descending.

Pale consternation overcasts her visage.

T H E A N O.

O most portentous, execrable sight!
I led the virgins to rejoin your princess,
Who had escap'd their care— Mysterious heav'n!
Where was thy pow'r to check a mother's rage?
Where was thy mercy, when her savage hand
Unclos'd the jaws of slaughter on her children?

Æ S O N.

Oh! all-surpassing evil!

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

When and how?

Oh! speak.

T H E A N O.

A knife of sacrifice she seiz'd,
And in their tender bosoms plung'd its point.
We found her planted near their welt'ring limbs;

L

Her

Her fiery eye-balls on their wounds were fix'd ;
A ghastly triumph swell'd her wild revenge,
And madness mingled smiles with horror.

Æ S O N.

Horror

Is my companion now. The race of Jason
One common crime hath swallow'd in its gulph.

T H E A N O.

The goddess bow'd in pity from her shrine ;
When straight a voice oracular in thunder,
Whose awful clamour must have reach'd your ears,
Peal'd o'er the rocking temple. " Impious Creon,"
The voice proclaim'd, " thy guilt hath fill'd its measure,
" Then fall, thou victim to the gods of hell."

Æ S O N.

Tremendous sentence !

T H E A N O.

I with fearful steps

Haste to the palace.

Æ S O N.

Make me thy associate,
And I to calm his violence will join.

SCENE THE SECOND.

COLCHIANS, MEDEA rushing from the temple,

PHÆACIANS following.

FIRST COLCHIAN.

Behold, where, dropping with her children's blood,
The lost Medea comes.

M E-

M E D E A.

It is begun.

Now to complete my vengeance will I mount
 The burning chariot of my bright forefather;
 The rapid steeds o'er Corinth will I drive,
 And with the scatter'd lightnings from their manes
 Consume its walls, its battlements and tow'rs,
 Its princes, people, palaces and temples:
 Then, as the flames embrace the purple clouds,
 And the proud city crumbles from its base,
 The demon of my rage and indignation
 All grim and wrapt in terror shall bestride
 The mountainous embers, and denounce abroad
 To gods and men my wrongs, and my revenge.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

How is thy wisdom exil'd from thy breast,
 Its native seat, nor leaves one trace behind
 To show, it once was there!

M E D E A.

Weep'st thou, old man?

Ha! speak; thou venerable mourner, speak
 Thy cause of anguish. Hadst thou not a daughter
 Wise like Minerva, like the morning fair,
 And once thy dearest comfort? Hath she left thee,
 Left thy decrepit head for grief to seize
 And dash against the tomb? Weep, weep, old man,
 The slight remainder of thy days exhaust
 In lamentation; she is lost for ever,
 Lost to herself and thee: and never more
 Shalt thou the beauty of her face contemplate,
 Nor hear again the wisdom of her tongue.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Thou dost mistake me for the stern Æetes.
 I am but one among th' unnumber'd Colchians,
 Who mourn in thee their nation's glory fall'n.

M E D E A.

I well deserve this pity— yours— and yours,
 Who kindly weep around me. As I pass,
 I wade through seas of tears— I hear no sound,
 But sighs and groans from sorrow-beaten breasts.
 Dishevell'd fragments of uprooted hairs
 From the wild head of anguish fly about me.

Is it not fitting? When Medea mourns,
 Shall not the skies assume their blackest robes,
 And scowl upon mankind? Medea sighs;
 Shall not hell groan, and heav'n reply in thunder?
 It is the off-spring of the Sun, who wrings
 Her helpless hands, who rends her scatter'd locks.

My heart is cold— The thread of life unwinds.
 Now triumph, death— Thy conquest is Medea.

[She sinks into the lap of a Phæacian.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Repose her harass'd limbs with tend'rest care.
 If this delirious transport be no more,
 Than some short tumult of the heated brain;
 Refreshing sleep may cool that feat of thought,
 And wand'ring reason sojourn there again.

Essay your vocal pow'r, harmonious maids;
 Some new and soothing modulation chuse;
 Dress in persuasive melody your numbers,
 Whose artful cadence from the breaking heart
 May steal its cares, and fold them in oblivion.

A P H Æ A C I A N turning towards the sea.

[T R O C H A I C S.]

Azure god, whose active waters
 Beat with endless toil below,
 Calm the ruder blasts to slumber;
 While to yonder grove, which bends
 Stately o'er thy shaded bosom,
 Softly-sighing gales aspire.

And, ye zephyrs, which ascending
 Fan the plummy verdure there,
 Lulling whispers, drowsy murmurs
 Through the trembling foliage breathe
 O'er the wakeful brow of sorrow
 Care-beguiling sleep to spread.

Or my gently-soothing measure
 On your downy pinions bear
 Through the grief-distemper'd spirit
 With delusion sweet to steal,
 Till, on music's lap dissolving,
 Madness lull its weary'd head.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Your queen recovers, and her look serene
 Shows, the mild beam of reason shines anew.

M E D E A.

Grief, as o'erlabour'd with its cruel office,
 Awhile is pausing, till its strength return.
 I will at least possess the short relief

To

To see my infants. Sure, my faithful friends,
 From my sad heart no evils can erase
 Maternal gladness at my children's sight.
 Go, lead them from the temple— They will smile,
 And lift my thoughts to momentary joy.

Not gone, my virgins? Wherefore this delay?
 Why all aghast? Why tremble thus your limbs?
 Ha! whence this blood? My hands are dipt in slaughter.
 Speak, ye dumb oracles of terror, speak; [Rising.
 Where are my children? My distracted brain
 A thousand dreadful images recalls
 Imperfectly remember'd— Speak, I charge you;
 Where are my children?— Silent still and pale.

Enough— Fell pow'rs, your purpose is accomplish'd;
 Medea's sufferings are complete and full.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

The swelling passions struggle in her breast,
 And find no vent. My ever-honour'd mistress,
 This is the time for tears and exclamations.

M E D E A.

Can exclamations down the wind convey
 From these retentive ears my children's groans?
 Or can this murd'rous hand by tears be whiten'd?

Hear, Neptune! o'er this citadel emerge
 To reach my crime; or send the pow'r of whirlwinds
 To sweep my footsteps from the stable earth,
 In rapid flight to Caucasus transport
 And fix me shiv'ring on the pointed rock.
 Let Nemesis revive the breathless clay
 Of my slain infants, to the rav'nous beak
 Their lips disfigure, and their tender fingers

Arm

Arm with the vulture's talons ; that their wounds
 May be imprinted on their mother's breast
 With Promethèan torture, and her heart
 In blood bewail the error of her hand.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

It was the act of ignorance and madness.
 Just Themis knows thy purity of mind,
 And will with pity cleanse that erring hand.

M E D E A.

Not the disburthen'd sluices of the skies,
 The wat'ry Nereids with the ocean's store,
 Nor all the tears, which misery hath shed,
 Can from the mother wash her children's blood.

Where shall I hide me from the piercing day ?
 What man will grant protection to my guilt,
 What god afford me safeguard at his altar ?
 Thou must alone receive me, thou, O earth.
 Then, while I crush my bosom on thy surface,
 And grasp the dust within my struggling hands,
 Distain my limbs, and strike my head against thee,
 At length in pity of my sufferings sue
 The loit'ring gods to rear the friendly bolt,
 And close my sorrows on thy peaceful breast.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

See Jason too unconscious of his loss.

S C E N E T H E T H I R D.

COLCHIANS, MEDEA, PHÆACIANS
 and JASON.

J A S O N.

Is she restor'd ?

F I R S T

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Restor'd to full sensation
Of her increas'd afflictions, there she lies.

J A S O N.

They shall be soon diminish'd. Fate at last
Hath folded up its inauspicious scroll,
And fairer volumes open to our eyes.
I see, you doubt me all. That pale dejection
Reveals distrust and fear. I tell you, Colchians,
Prophetic Themis from her spotless shrine,
When she unfolds the oracle of justice,
Fills not her priest with more enraptur'd fervor,
Than now her present deity supplies
To my stability of soul, which marks
Success in prospect, and will show me still
Not less, than Jason in the brightest hour,
Yourself can witness, of his pass'd achievements.
Perhaps she sleeps.

[Looking attentively on Medea.]

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Ah! no.

J A S O N.

Then, dearest woman,
Look on me, hear me, trust me once again.
I have resign'd Creüsa and her kingdom;
I have appeas'd my father; Creon's wrath
Is ineffectual now: then deign to cast
One glance on Jason, on thy suppliant husband
Return'd in tears of penitence and shame,
But with redoubled tenderness and truth,

M E D E A.

Oh! Jason—Thou and I have once been happy.
What are we now?

J A S O N.

Let thy forgiving breath
Revive my courage fetter'd yet and tame
With thy displeasure; and my active love
Shall soon transport thee from this seat of woe:
Then, as we bound before the fav'ring gale,
Shall fondly whisper, we may still be happy.

M E D E A starting up.

Survey these hands.

J A S O N.

What blood is this?

M E D E A.

Thy children's.

J A S O N.

Inhuman Creon! Could thy malice chuse
No other victims, than my blameless boys?
I come, incens'd Corinthians, to divulge
This profanation through your madding streets;
Myself will guide your torrent of revolt,
And whelm its billows on this royal savage.

M E D E A.

If heav'n had once meant kindly to Medea,
Some tyrant had been found, some other hand,
Than hers alone to spill her children's blood.

The season for upbraiding is no more;
But know, thou wretched like myself, that madness
Arm'd my blind rage against them, and the deed
Now weighs me down to everlasting night.

M

J A-

J A S O N falling on his knees.

O thou, whose equal balance to mankind
Distributes justice, and restoring mercy,
If pray'rs from this polluted breast may reach
Thy pure abode, exert thy righteous pow'r;
Drop thy asswaging pity on her heart;
On me exhaust the quiver of thy vengeance.

M E D E A.

Was not my portion of distresses large,
Ye pow'rs obdurate? Hath this heart refus'd
To sigh, these eyes been sparing of their streams?

Impell'd by indignation, still my spirit
Would challenge your injustice, which requir'd
My children's blood to mingle with my tears.

Take back the mighty mind, you fram'd to break,
First rent by anguish, then by guilt deform'd.

[Draws a poniard.

A V O I C E from the temple.

Hold, off-spring of the Sun; arise; repair
To Juno's shrine; reply not, but obey.

S C E N E THE FOURTH.

J A S O N, COLCHIANS and PHÆACIANS.

J A S O N.

Celestial presence, I adore thy greatness;
Yet thy tremendous voice, which rocks these bulwarks,
Appals not me, who bid destruction welcome.
Hope, which cements the structure of the heart,
From mine is moulder'd, and despair is lodg'd
Within the ruins.

SCENE THE FIFTH.

JASON, COLCHIANS, PHÆACIANS
and LYCANDER.

LYCANDER.

Gods! what new reverse
Hath cast the first of heroes to the earth?
Thy mariners expect thee; haste away.
Too high the ferment rises. Oh! recall
Theano's last presage of black events.
The wild impatience of religious rage
Stings ev'ry bosom. Our Corinthian dames
Range through the streets with torches in their hands,
Invoking Juno, hymeneal Juno.
An impulse more, than natural, directs
Those armed numbers to some hideous act.
They breathe demoniac fury on the palace.
Should Creon meet them, he must fall. Rise, prince;
I must attend thy flight. Our timely absence
Will save our streets from homicide.

J A S O N.

No, death

May reach me too.

LYCANDER.

For pity—Ha! the skies
Share in our tumult, and a bloody veil
Hangs o'er the sick'ning sun. The air wheels round us.
Grim Neptune yonder shakes his stormy trident.
Why heaves the loosen'd rock? Why drop these clouds,

In threat'ning murmurs from their dusky folds
Streak'd with sulphureous gleams?

[Thunder, lightning, and the
stage darken'd.

J A S O N rising.

This suits my soul

For its infernal journey all prepar'd,
A pale attendant on my children's ghosts
In Tartarus to dwell, while they repose
In blest Elysium.

F I R S T C O L C H I A N.

Look, the holy priestess
Breaks from the palace in disorder'd haste,
And to her temple flies. In consternation
Old Æson too is nigh.

S C E N E THE SIXTH.

JASON, COLCHIANS, PHÆACIANS,
LYCANDER, ÆSON and THESSALIANS.

Æ S O N.

My son! my son!

J A S O N.

If thou dost bring fresh evils, thou art welcome.

Æ S O N.

We found the harden'd king. My words were vain,
So were Theano's. With a desp'rate band,
Of life regardless, and contemning Juno,
Against her grove he sallies,

C R E O N

CREON behind the scenes.

Since no longer
You dread my scepter, you shall feel my sword;
Which o'er your mangled carcases shall hew
Its purple passage to chastise the author
Of this revolt, and chace barbarians hence.

LYCANDER.

The king's rash voice. He charges.

[A shout within.

ÆSON.

Hideous roar!

[Thunder and lightning.

O Jove, be merciful!

LYCANDER.

He gives the signal,
And shows the tumult through those livid flames.

JASON.

I hear the clang of arms. Unmov'd and cold,
My heart rejects that once-enliv'ning sound,
And sighs for dissolution. Pause awhile,
Sad spirit, till Medea's fate is known,
Then prompt my sword to justice on myself.

ÆSON.

That shout denounces triumph.

LYCANDER.

Yes, and safety
To all, but Creon. Give the torrent way.

SCENE

SCENE THE SEVENTH.

JASON, COLCHIANS, PHÆACIANS,
LYCANDER, ÆSON, THESSALIANS and
CORINTHIANS.

FIRST CORINTHIAN.

Where is the honour'd priestess? We will bring,
If she so wills, the sacrilegious head
Of our slain tyrant to her sacred feet.

SCENE THE LAST.

JASON, COLCHIANS, PHÆACIANS,
LYCANDER, ÆSON, THESSALIANS
and CORINTHIANS falling back on each side of
the stage, as THEANO descends from the temple.

LYCANDER.

Be silent, all. Theano from the goddess
To this assembly moves. Night flies before her;
Earth, seas and heav'ns are calm'd.

THEANO.

Ye sons of Corinth,
Old men of Colchis and Thessalians, hear.
At length the gods restrain their vengeful rod.
The dreadful scene is clos'd. Iolchian prince,
Thou from Æetes' daughter art disjoin'd.
Look, where the goddess through th' aerial champain
Sends in a chariot drawn by winged dragons
That all-transcending woman into climes
Remote, but whither is from thee conceal'd.

J A S O N.

Heav'n guide her fortunes. This shall govern mine.

[Offers to fall on his sword and is prevented.]

T H E A N O.

Unmanly desperation! Will the grave
Hide thy disgrace, or ill-tongu'd rumor die,
When thou art ashes? No. Recall thy manhood.
Thou hast a father's kingdom to redeem.
Go, save a nation. These afflicted maids,
These aged Colchians to their homes restore.
Thus shall the censure, which thy frailty merits,
Be chang'd to blessings on thy gen'rous deeds,
And time's light finger loosen from thy breast
Its root of care, till peace of mind return.

E N D O F T H E L A S T A C T.

M E D E A

LESSON

Heav'n guide her fortunes. This shall govern mine.
[Others to fall on the sword and be preserved.]

THE ANO.

Unmanly desperation! Will the grave
Hide thy disgrace, or ill-royal's ruin die?
When thou art absent? No. Recall thy misdeeds.
Thou hast a father's kingdom to redeem.
Go, save a nation. These afflicted maids,
These aged Colchians to their homes restore.
Thus shall the curse, which thy frailty merits,
Be chang'd to blessings on thy generous deeds.
And time's light finger loosen from thy breast
The root of care, till peace of mind return.

END OF THE LAST ACT.

